



JUST THE FACTS: Traumatic Brain Injury Overcoming Problems at Work

Set Yourself Up For Success

- Look for a job with regular daily schedules and routine tasks.
- Discuss your condition with chain of command so they understand what has happened to you and your profile restrictions.
- Avoid work spaces with distracting noise or light, especially fluorescent lights.
- Before you return to work, think about how many people you'd like to interact with every day.
- Consider expanding the type of work you're willing to do.



Know Your Rights

- Read about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA; <http://www.ada.gov/>).

Discuss Duty Restrictions (profiles) with Your Health Care Provider

- Obtain appropriate documentation to avoid conflicts with command.

Ask for Help

- Request job coaching or supported employment.
- Ask your job coach to make frequent job-site visits.
- Make supportive phone calls after work.
- Seek out mentoring from a co-worker or retired worker.
- Remember that you don't have to tell your employer about your deployment or current challenges. You're only required to disclose a disability if you need accommodations.
- Have a vocational rehabilitation counselor visit your work site and do a job analysis. The counselor will point out any dangers and make suggestions to improve safety.



Ask for Help (cont.)

- Ask for other accommodations if you need them, including: handicap accessibility, flexible scheduling, extra time to learn new responsibilities, or time off for health-related appointments.
- Role-play possible difficult work situations with a trusted friend or a therapist. Don't expect to handle stress "in the moment".

Use Tricks to Compensate for Memory or Concentration Difficulties

- Schedule reminders using your cell phone or pager.
- Keep a task checklist on a clipboard.
- Use a tape recorder to keep track of tasks.
- Use a stop watch for time management.
- Use technology, including handheld and notebook computers.
- Divide large assignments into smaller tasks and steps.
- Focus on one task at a time.
- Use daily "To-Do" lists and check items off as they are completed.
- Keep a calendar to mark meetings and deadlines.



**Keep a task
checklist on a
clipboard**



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Work Well with Supervisors and Co-Workers



- Arrange regular meetings with your supervisor to discuss your progress, strengths, and areas that need improvement. Constructive feedback can be critical to your success.
- Explain how feedback can help you avoid mistakes and frustration.
- Make certain that you hear the positive.
- Show your willingness to change.
- Remember that everyone struggles with co-workers and bosses from time to time.

Don't Overdo It

- Try job sharing with another individual.
- Schedule regular rest breaks to prevent stimulus overload and fatigue.
- Focus on your safety and health.
- Rejoin the workforce only when you are ready, and make sure to do so slowly. Do not jump into a demanding job before you can handle it.
- Consider starting in a part-time position.

